

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. In large scale animal feeding operations in which the animals reside in pens, each pen proximate to a working alley, a method of treating the pen of animals comprising:

situating a trailer in the working alley proximate to the pen of animals;

lowering the trailer such that at least a portion of a frame of the trailer sits at ground level;

and

working the animals through a squeeze chute mounted on the trailer.

2. The method of treating the pen of animals as defined in claim 1 wherein situating a trailer in the working alley proximate to the pen of animals further comprises pulling the trailer with a tractor to a location proximate to the pen of animals.

3. The method of treating the pen of animals as defined in claim 2 wherein lowering the trailer such that at least a portion of a frame of the trailer sits at ground level further comprises lowering a hitch of the tractor.

4. The method of treating the pen of animals as defined in claim 2 wherein lowering the trailer such that at least a portion of a frame of the trailer sits at ground level further comprises operating hydraulic controls of the tractor to raise wheels of the trailer.

5. The method of treating the pen of animals as defined in claim 4 wherein lowering the trailer such that at least a portion of a frame of the trailer sits at ground level further comprises lowering a hitch of the tractor.

6. The method of treating the pen of animals as defined in claim 1 wherein situating a trailer in the working alley proximate to the pen of animals further comprises pulling the trailer with a truck to a location proximate to the pen of animals.

7. The method of treating the pen of animals as defined in claim 6 wherein lowering the trailer such that at least a portion of a frame of the trailer sits at ground level further comprises operating a hydraulic system on the trailer which raises wheels of the trailer.

8. The method of treating the pen of animals as defined in claim 6 wherein lowering the trailer such that at least a portion of a frame of the trailer sits at ground level further comprises:

supplying hydraulic fluid under pressure from a power-take-off unit of the truck; and
raising wheels of the trailer under using the hydraulic fluid from the truck.

9. The method of treating the pen of cattle as defined in claim 1 further comprising, prior to the working step:

creating a squeeze pen proximate to a back of the trailer from portable fence panels; and
forcing animals from the pen of animals into the squeeze pen.

10. The method of treating the pen of animals as defined in claim 9 wherein creating a squeeze pen proximate to a back of the trailer from portable fence panels further comprises unfolding a plurality of fence panels connected to a back of the trailer which, when unfolded, create the squeeze pen.

11. The method of treating the pen of animals as defined in claim 1 further comprising arranging a series of gates on an exit end of the squeeze chute to selectively allow animals to exit the trailer from one of a first side and second side.

12. A mobile animal hospital for treating animals in a feedlot operation, the mobile animal hospital comprising:

a trailer having a frame and at least one set of wheels;

a squeeze chute mounted on the trailer, and wherein an entrance portion of the squeeze chute faces a back of the trailer, and an exit portion of the squeeze chute faces a front of the trailer; and

wherein the at least one set of wheels are adapted to raise relative to the frame of the trailer such that at least a portion of the frame of the trailer rests at ground level when treating animals.

13. The mobile animal hospital as defined in claim 12 further comprising an offset walkway leading from the back of the trailer to the entrance portion of the squeeze chute, the offset walkway forcing the animals to proceed in single file to the entrance portion of the squeeze chute.

14. The mobile animal hospital as defined in claim 12 further comprising:

 a first gate hinged proximate to a first side of the trailer and also proximate to the front of the trailer;

 a second gate hinged proximate to a second side of the trailer and also proximate to the front of the trailer;

 a third gate hinged substantially at a center of the trailer and also proximate to the front of the trailer; and

 wherein the first, second and third gate may be selectively arranged to allow egress of the animals off one of the first and second sides of the trailer.

15. The mobile animal hospital as defined in claim 12 further comprising a set of fence panels connected to the back of the trailer, wherein the set of fence panels is adapted to fold up proximate to the back of the trailer for relocation, and wherein the set of fence panels is adapted to form a squeeze pen when unfolded.

16. The mobile animal hospital as defined in claim 15 wherein the set of fence panels connected to the back of the trailer further comprise:

 a first fence panel connected to and extending substantially perpendicular from the back of the trailer when in the unfolded configuration, the first fence panel connected on a first side of an entrance to an offset walkway leading to the squeeze chute;

 a second fence panel connected to and extending substantially perpendicular from the back of the trailer when in the unfolded configuration, the second fence panel connected on a second side of the entrance to the offset walkway;

a circular fence panel connected to the second fence panel, the circular fence panel's radius of curvature pointing away from the first fence panel; and

a gate panel connected to the first fence panel, the gate configured to swing within an area bounded in part by the circular fence panel.

17. The mobile animal hospital as defined in claim 12 further comprising:
 - a first hydraulic cylinder connected to a wheel on the first side of the trailer, and also connected to the frame, the first hydraulic cylinder configured to selectively raise and lower the wheel on the first side of the trailer; and
 - a second hydraulic cylinder connected to a wheel on the second side of the trailer, and also connected to the frame, the second hydraulic cylinder configured to selectively raise and lower the wheel on the first side of the trailer.
18. A method of treating cattle comprising:
 - pulling a trailer to be proximate to the cattle;
 - raising wheels of the trailer such that at least a portion of a frame of the trailer sits at ground level; and
 - treating the cattle, one at a time, utilizing a squeeze chute mounted on the trailer.
19. The method of treating cattle as defined in claim 18 wherein pulling a trailer to be proximate to the cattle further comprises pulling the trailer with a tractor to a location proximate to the cattle.

20. The method of treating cattle as defined in claim 19 wherein raising wheels of the trailer such that at least a portion of a frame of the trailer sits at ground level further comprises lowering a hitch of the tractor.

21. The method of treating cattle as defined in claim 19 wherein raising wheels of the trailer such that at least a portion of a frame of the trailer sits at ground level further comprises operating hydraulic controls of the tractor to raise wheels of the trailer.

22. The method of treating cattle as defined in claim 21 further comprising lowering a hitch of the tractor.

23. The method of treating cattle as defined in claim 18 wherein pulling a trailer to be proximate to the pen of cattle further comprises pulling the trailer with a truck to a location proximate to the cattle.

24. The method of treating cattle as defined in claim 23 wherein raising wheels of the trailer such that at least a portion of a frame of the trailer sits at ground level further comprises operating a hydraulic system on the trailer which raises the wheels of the trailer.

25. The method of treating cattle as defined in claim 23 wherein raising wheels of the trailer such that at least a portion of a frame of the trailer sits at ground level further comprises:

supplying hydraulic fluid under pressure from a power-take-off unit of the truck; and

raising wheels of the trailer under using the hydraulic fluid from the truck.

26. The method of treating cattle as defined in claim 18 further comprising, prior to the treating step:

 unfolding a plurality of fence panels connected to a back of the trailer to create a squeeze pen; and

 placing the cattle into the squeeze pen.

27. The method of treating cattle as defined in claim 18 further comprising arranging a series of gates on an exit end of the squeeze chute to selectively allow cattle to exit the trailer from one of a first side and second side of the trailer.

28. A mobile cattle hospital comprising:

 a trailer having a frame and at least one set of wheels;

 a squeeze chute mounted on the trailer;

 an offset walkway mounted on the trailer, the offset walkway leading from a back of the trailer to an entrance portion of the squeeze chute;

 a plurality of gates hinged to the trailer that selectively allow cattle leaving the squeeze chute to exit the trailer to one of a first and second sides of the trailer;

 a set of fence panels connected to the back of the trailer that are folded to be proximate to the trailer for relocation, and unfold to form a squeeze pen; and

 wherein the at least one set of wheels are adapted to raise relative to the frame of the trailer such that at least a portion of the frame of the trailer rests at ground level when treating animals.

29. The mobile animal hospital as defined in claim 28 wherein the plurality of gates further comprises:

a first gate hinged proximate to the first side of the trailer and also proximate to a front of the trailer;

a second gate hinged proximate to the second side of the trailer and also proximate to the front of the trailer; and

a third gate hinged substantially at a center of the trailer and also proximate to the front of the trailer.

30. The mobile animal hospital as defined in claim 28 wherein the set of fence panels connected to the back of the trailer further comprise:

a first fence panel connected to and extending substantially perpendicular from the back of the trailer when in the unfolded configuration, the first fence panel connected on a first side of an entrance to the offset walkway leading to the squeeze chute;

a second fence panel connected to and extending substantially perpendicular from the back of the trailer when in the unfolded configuration, the second fence panel connected on a second side of the entrance to the offset walkway;

a circular fence panel connected to the second fence panel, the circular fence panel's radius of curvature pointing away from the first fence panel; and

a gate panel connected to the first fence panel, the gate configured to swing within an area bounded partially by the circular fence panel.

31. The mobile animal hospital as defined in claim 28 further comprising:

 a first hydraulic cylinder connected to a wheel on the first side of the trailer, and also connected to the frame, the first hydraulic cylinder configured to selectively raise and lower the wheel on the first side of the trailer; and

 a second hydraulic cylinder connected to a wheel on the second side of the trailer, and also connected to the frame, the second hydraulic cylinder configured to selectively raise and lower the wheel on the first side of the trailer.